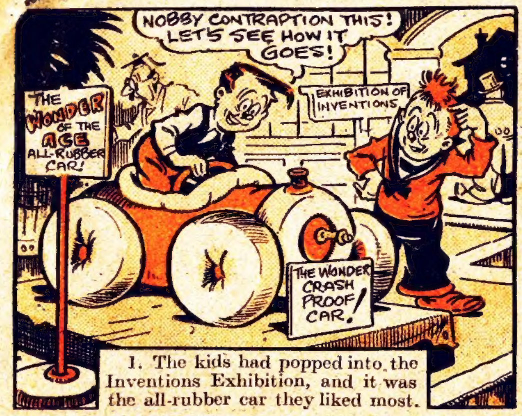
COMIC CUTS 2D.

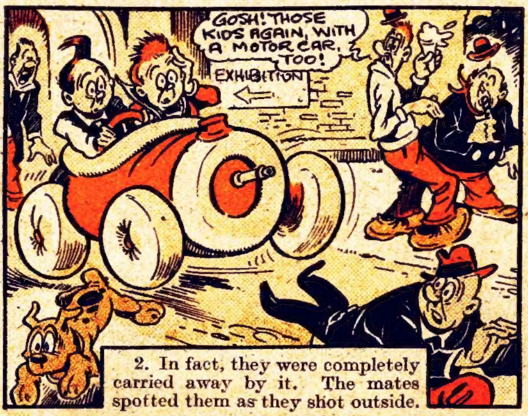
SUNNY AND FUNNY, BEST FOR THE MONEY!

[No. 2,691.] [JUNE 20, 1942.]

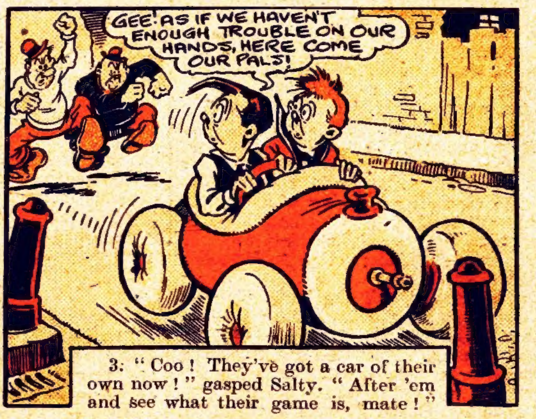
THE CRUSOE KIDS PLAY THEIR TRUMP CARD AND WIN THE RUBBER!


NOBBY CONTRAPTION THIS! LET'S SEE HOW IT GOES!
THE WONDER OF THE AGE ALL-RUBBER CAR!
EXHIBITION OF INVENTIONS
THE WONDER CRASH PROOF CAR!

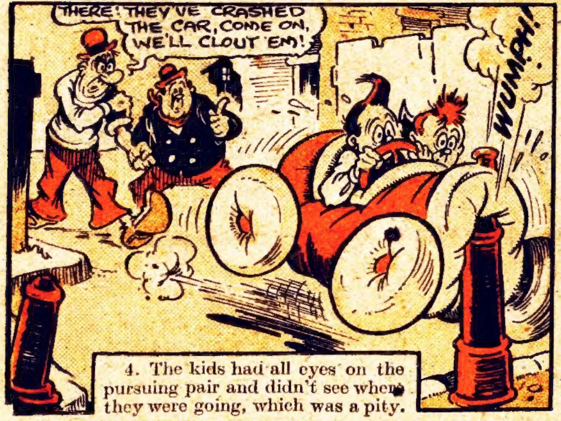
1. The kids had popped into the Inventions Exhibition, and it was the all-rubber car they liked most.


GOSH! THOSE KIDS AGAIN, WITH A MOTOR CAR, TOO!
EXHIBITION

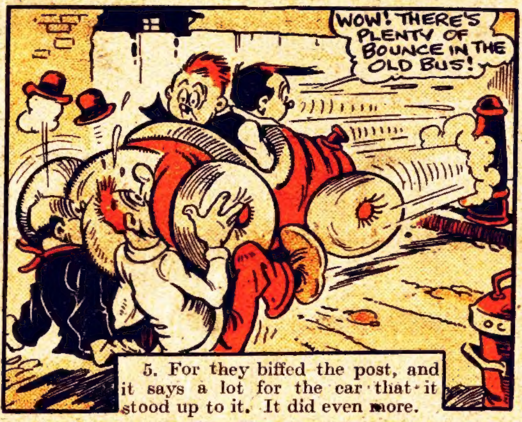
2. In fact, they were completely carried away by it. The mates spotted them as they shot outside.


GEE, AS IF WE HAVEN'T ENOUGH TROUBLE ON OUR HANDS, HERE COME OUR PALS!

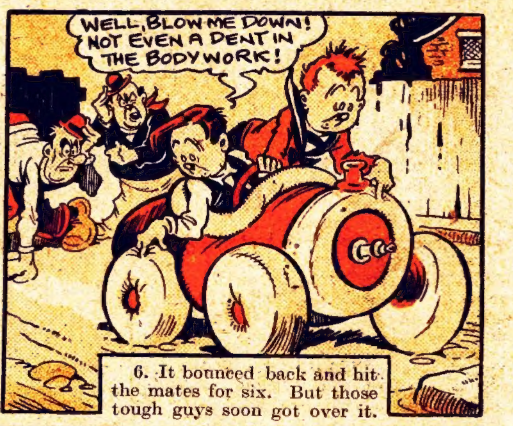
3. "Coo! They've got a car of their own now!" gasped Salty. "After 'em and see what their game is, mate!"


THERE! THEY'VE CRASHED THE CAR, COME ON, WE'LL CLOUT 'EM!
WUMPH!

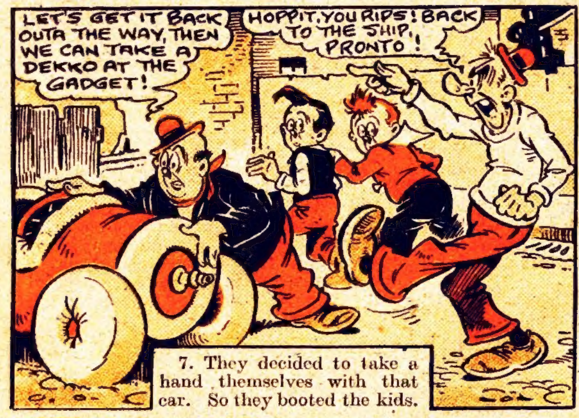
4. The kids had all eyes on the pursuing pair and didn't see where they were going, which was a pity.


WOW! THERE'S PLENTY OF BOUNCE IN THE OLD BUS!

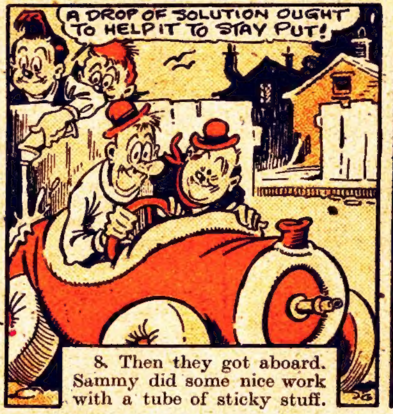
5. For they biffed the post, and it says a lot for the car that it stood up to it. It did even more.


WELL, BLOW ME DOWN! NOT EVEN A DENT IN THE BODYWORK!

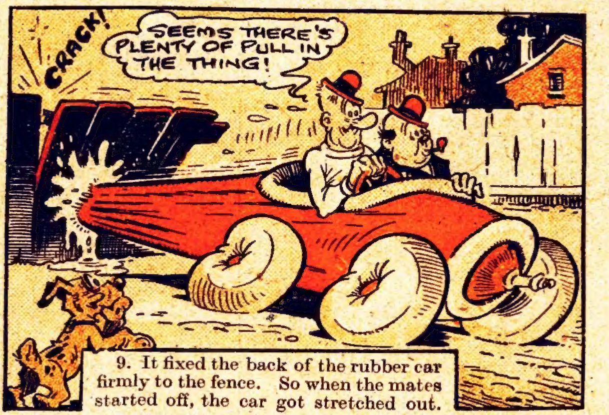
6. It bounced back and hit the mates for six. But those tough guys soon got over it.


LET'S GET IT BACK OUTA THE WAY, THEN WE CAN TAKE A DEKKO AT THE GADGET!
HOPPIT, YOU RIPS! BACK TO THE SHIP, PRONTO!

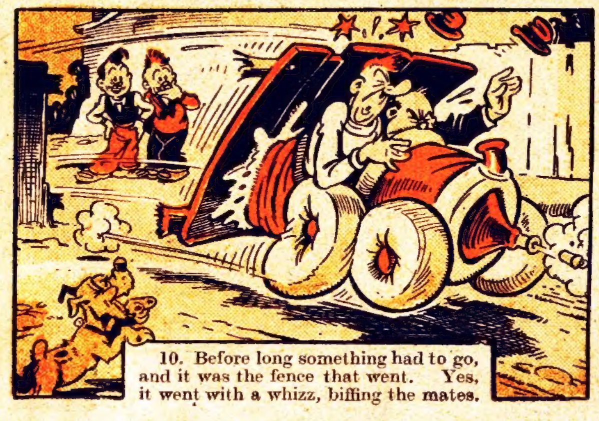
7. They decided to take a hand themselves with that car. So they booted the kids.


A DROP OF SOLUTION OUGHT TO HELP IT TO STAY PUT!

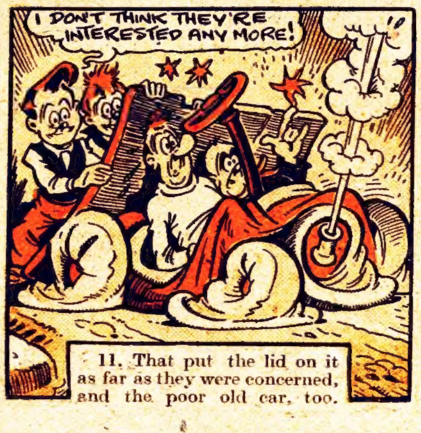
8. Then they got aboard. Sammy did some nice work with a tube of sticky stuff.


CRACK!
SEEMS THERE'S PLENTY OF PULL IN THE THING!

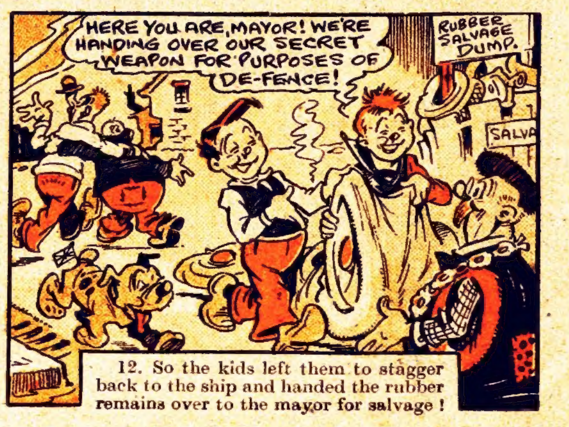
9. It fixed the back of the rubber car firmly to the fence. So when the mates started off, the car got stretched out.



10. Before long something had to go, and it was the fence that went. Yes, it went with a whizz, biffing the mates.


I DON'T THINK THEY'RE INTERESTED ANY MORE!

11. That put the lid on it as far as they were concerned, and the poor old car, too.


HERE YOU ARE, MAYOR! WE'RE HANDING OVER OUR SECRET WEAPON FOR PURPOSES OF DE-FENCE!
RUBBER SALVAGE DUMP.
SALVA

12. So the kids left them to stagger back to the ship and handed the rubber remains over to the mayor for salvage!

Kenton Steel's Latest Case.

THE EXTRA PASSENGER!

The Marshalling Yard.

KENTON STEEL rose to his feet, yawned and stretched his arms above his head. The clock on the mantelpiece said ten minutes past ten.

"I think I'll go for a short walk and get some fresh air before going to bed, Nutty," he remarked to his young assistant.

"Good idea, chief," replied Nutty Brown. "You've been cooped up in here for some hours now."

"You can turn in," Steel went on. "See you later. Good-night."

With that Steel went out. The night was warm, and on the close side, as though a storm was imminent, and the famous crime-smasher did not even trouble to put on a hat.

Humming to himself, he strode briskly along one street after another. Hardly anybody else was about, and traffic was practically nil. All was quiet and peaceful.

Steel reached a crossing where traffic lights were fixed, and as he did so a car pulled up, the light being red. It gave Steel the opportunity to cross the road.

As he stepped off the kerb the man at the wheel of the car lit a cigarette. For a brief instant his face was lit up as he puffed. But that brief instant was sufficient for Steel to recognise him.

"Birdie Gould!" he muttered. "Out of prison again, and up to his old tricks, I'll be bound. That car won't be his, for a start—he'll have stolen it. I wonder what game he's on to-night? I'll try to find out."

Quickly diverting his steps, he walked a few paces till he was behind the car and near the middle of the road. Then he swung round in the gloom and, satisfied that he could not be seen by any of the car's occupants, he made a dive for the rear of the vehicle.

It carried a spare wheel at the back, just the thing for Steel's purpose. Even as the traffic light changed and the car bounded forward, the crime-smasher succeeded in getting himself more or less firmly ensconced, clinging tightly to the spare wheel.

The car quickly gained speed, and Steel wondered how long his unexpected ride was likely to last. It would not be a very comfortable one in any case, and the farther they went the worse it would become. But he meant to see it through, all the same, now that he had embarked upon it.

For over half an hour the car drove on without a stop. Then, in a very quiet road of big houses, all blacked-out for the night, it pulled up.

Instantly Steel dropped off from his precarious perch, glad of the relief it gave him. He heard the front door being thrown open and the voices of two men, and he wriggled swiftly underneath the back of the car to avoid being seen.

Lying there, he saw the feet of the two men as they got out of the car and watched them recede towards the gate of the big house outside which they had stopped.

Silence followed, and Steel decided to remain where he was for the time being. Birdie Gould, the man he had recognised at the wheel, was an expert housebreaker with a long prison record. Steel had not the slightest doubt that he and his companion were engaged upon another burglary to-night.

At last the two men returned, and the crouching crime-smasher heard the thumps of heavy bundles being dumped in the back of the car. The pair got in, and Steel emerged from underneath, to resume his hold on the spare wheel.

The car shot forward, and a run of about a quarter of an hour followed. Then it pulled up again, and, as it did so, Steel dropped off and darted into the deep gloom.

There he watched as the men got out of the car and dragged forth the bundles. Carrying their burdens between them, they walked along the road which skirted the railway, Steel on their heels.

They reached a small gate which they pushed open and passed through. Following them, Steel found himself in a big railway marshalling yard, with numerous trucks of various kinds on nearly every set of rails.

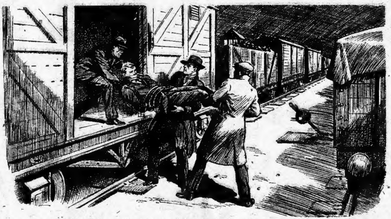
Keeping well in the shadows, Birdie Gould and his companion passed down between two tracks. On one were several trucks waiting to be shunted. On the other track a complete goods train was ready made up.

Steam issued lazily from the funnel of the locomotive coupled to it, drawn up just by a signal arm. Evidently the train was shortly due to depart.

Peering ahead through the gloom, Steel followed the unsuspecting pair of crooks along the length of the goods train in the direction of the guard's van. Presently they reached a big closed van.

After a hurried look round, one man slowly and silently drew aside the sliding doors and dumped his burden on the floor of the van. His companion deposited his own load, then both men jumped nimbly into the van and hauled the heavy sacks—for such they were—across to the far side.

Kenton Steel had catfooted forward meanwhile till he was opposite the open door, standing by the end of a solitary open truck. He stared hard, wondering what action to take now.



Between them they lifted the helpless Steel into the van.

And, even as he was wondering, the unexpected happened. A sudden violent blow landed on his unprotected head, and, without a moan, the crime-smasher slumped to the ground senseless.

Next instant his assailant was standing over him, peering at the face of the man he had struck down. An oath escaped him.

"Kenton Steel, curse him!" he hissed. "How on earth did he come to be here?"

He emitted a low whistle, and the two men in the van showed themselves at the open door again.

"That you, Spike?" said Birdie cautiously. "Why, what the heck——"

For he had caught sight of the prostrate figure. He jumped down and his companion followed suit. All three men stood round the unconscious crime-smasher.

"It's Kenton Steel," the man addressed as Spike informed the other two. "He must have been following you."

"But how—how could he?" spluttered Birdie. "We did the job as arranged and it went off without a hitch. We never saw a soul when we abandoned the car a few minutes ago."

"Kenton Steel must have seen you," snapped Spike. "That's why he's here on the prowl. And he's seen more than we want him to—more than's good for him."

With a snarl he jabbed Steel in the ribs with his foot.

"Anyway, he's not going to foil our plans," he went on. "We've got everything cut and dried, and we're going on this goods train to headquarters, as arranged, with the stuff. What's more, Mister Kenton Steel is coming with us."

"Taking him with us?" cried Birdie. "What on earth for, Spike?"

"To make sure that he doesn't spoil things for us," was Spike's reply, with a leer. "We'll fix him."

With quick, deft fingers he gagged the unconscious Steel, then firmly lashed his arms to his sides and bound his ankles.

"Now give me a hand with him into the van," he said. "Get a move on—the train'll be starting any minute now."

Between them they quickly lifted the helpless Steel into the van and followed him in. As they closed the sliding doors there came a screech from the engine.

Then, with a chorus of clangs, the long goods train started on its way, bound for a distant destination and with a strange and unofficial cargo aboard.

A Desperate Race!

WITH head splitting, Kenton Steel came back to life again at last and blinked around him in the gloom. As his brain cleared, recollection returned, and he realised that he must have been struck down from behind.

He soon divined that he was in a moving train, whilst the sound of their voices told him that the men he had been trailing were not many feet from where he lay helpless on the floor.

For some time he listened to them. They were talking of their exploit of that night, confirming Steel's suspicions about a burglary.

Everything had been neatly planned. Birdie and his companion had broken into a big house which they knew to be temporarily untenanted, and ransacked it. Then they had joined Spike, by arrangement, and knowing the goods train was leaving, had calmly planned to travel by it, taking the loot with them, to their secret headquarters.

Now, owing to his interference, Steel was added to the party. And helpless in their hands as he was, the crime-smasher could not help wondering what they intended to do with him.

Before long, however, he was informed on that point. Suddenly he heard his name mentioned.

"How about Kenton Steel, Spike?" asked Birdie. "You said you'd fix him."

"So I will an' all," snapped Spike. "After this train passes through Longdon Tunnel, it runs over the river, as you know. And Kenton Steel's going into it. We'll sling him out as we cross."

The other two gave grunts of approval but Steel himself, needless to say, was not at all in favour of this plan. Desperately he began to struggle with the bonds round his arms in a frantic endeavour to free himself.

The cord was tightly tied, however, and for a long time all his efforts were futile. Then at last, when he was beginning to give up hope, he felt a slight slackening, and he redoubled his efforts.

He was careful not to betray himself by either noise or movement. Fortunately, the train created a loud din as it jogged along, and in addition there was the continuous talk of the three crooks.

They took no notice of Steel, who carried on until at last he managed to work one wrist free. After that it was comparatively easy to deal with the other lashing.

Nevertheless, he was careful not to disturb the cords more than was absolutely necessary, so that at a casual glance he still seemed to be bound. Satisfied with the result of his efforts, he lay still to regain his breath, not worrying about the gag.

"Not far off the tunnel now," he heard Spike remark.

"No, and that means that Kenton Steel is shortly due for his cold bath," growled Spike.

Steel permitted himself a silent chuckle. There came a shriek from the engine, and the train began to be swallowed up in the gloomy depths of th long tunnel.

Then Steel lost no time in acting. I was pitch black inside the van, and eve the gap made by the door, which ha been partly opened, was not visib But, rising to his feet, the crime-smash cautiously groped his way across t where he guessed it to be.

He reached it and passed outside, almost choked by the steam and fumes blowing back from the engine. The glare from its fire box lit the tunnel with a curious, flickering light, sufficient for Steel's purpose.

Whilst the three crooks were blissfully unaware of his escape, the crime-smasher daringly worked his way along from one truck to the next in the direction of the engine. He had a long way to go, and he was anxious, if he could, to gain his objective before the train was out of the tunnel and his escape discovered.

His face blackened, his eyes and nose filled with flying grit and smuts, Steel kept manfully on, thankful for the great length of the tunnel. Nearer and nearer he worked his way until at last, when not very far from the tunnel's end, he managed to scramble on to the locomotive.

Two very surprised men stared wide-eyed as Steel suddenly appeared, like some grimy phantom. More staggered still, they listened to his blurted words.

"Three desperate crooks are on this train!" he gulped. "They must be caught! Where is your first stop?"

"Tipdene," replied the fireman. "That's another twenty miles run."

"Good!" gasped Steel.

Borrowing a damp rag, he wiped his hands as clean as he could. Then, while the footplate swayed and throbbed beneath him, he quickly wrote a message on a piece of paper and tied it to a jagged piece of coal.

By that time the tunnel had been left behind, and Steel was able to explain who he was and what he intended to do.

"I'll throw this message into the first signal box we pass," he said. "It's to ask the signalman to inform the police and have them ready at Tipdene when the train arrives. Meanwhile, I'll keep a watch out to see that the crooks don't drop off the train."

The train, a regular running fast goods, was travelling at too big a speed for them to think of jumping off without risk of serious injury, if nothing worse.

"Signal-box just ahead, sir!" suddenly sang out the fireman.

"Thanks!" said Steel, and got ready.

The signal-box was a big one with plenty of windows, though none were open. Not that Steel worried about that, however. He hurled the coal clean through a plate of glass, close by the head of a startled signalman.

Then, as the goods train continued on, he gesticulated excitedly till the train rounded a bend. By that time the signalman had, out of curiosity, picked up the missile, and seen the note.

He acted promptly, and the police at Tipdene were informed at once. Not till it was near the sidings did the goods train slacken to a reasonable speed for the crooks to attempt to escape.

Then, one after another, they dropped to the ground, after first hurling out their sacks of loot. But Steel was already racing towards them, however, with a number of officers on his heels.

Though the trio tried to make a dash for it, they were quickly caught and taken with the booty to the police station. After which Kenton Steel was run back home in a fast police car to a much-needed bath and a well-earned sleep!

(Another Kenton Steel story in our next number, on sale Friday week.)

20-6-42

A thrilling story of R.A.F. heroes and Jap trickery!

DRAGON'S PARADE!

The dive ended with the plane's wheels almost touching the dragon's back !

The Warning in the Sky!

"HALLO !" muttered Flight - Lieutenant Tony Starr. "There aren't any landing lights."

"They switched 'em off quick," responded Sergeant Badger, his rear gunner. "The alert must be on."

The Super-Defiant fighter, Flying Skull, was over Ayong Island, one of the few British bases in the Indian Ocean area. The night was uncommonly dark for the tropics; there was no moon, and a slight haze dimmed the stars.

Tony zoomed skyward, throttled back and glided quietly. He and Badger could hear the faint wailing of the sirens from Ayong far below. Another Japanese air-raid was expected, and no British patrol was permitted to land during an alert unless from urgent necessity. This was to avoid machines being caught on the ground during bombing attacks.

"Well, the luck's changed, my bold Badger," remarked Tony. "We shall just have to fly around for awhile. I expect our planes have taken off, and the fighters of Squadron 739 from the other airfield on the island. And here's hoping the Jap monkeys get a warm welcome !"

During their recent patrol, the pals had shot down two enemy O fighters that had swooped on the Skull. But now they had no ammunition left, and their radio was out of action.

Suddenly Tony's eyes widened and he drew a sharp breath.

"There's a large aircraft ahead !" he exclaimed. "It's over the middle of the island, and dropping paratroops !"

His gaze remained fixed on the big plane, which looked only like a dark shadow. A score of small objects—actually men, as he realised—tumbled out of a hatch, and he saw them jerk almost motionless in the sky as dark-coloured parachutes opened above them. Then they drifted slowly down towards the jungle.

"The perishin' cheek o' those almond-eyed apes !" spluttered Badger. "If only we'd got a belt o' ammo !"

Tony banked above the Japanese plane, which had not been observed by the British fighters. Searchlights were groping in the night sky, and none focused on the troop-carrier.

"We can't let the blighter get away with this !" Tony muttered.

What could be done? Somehow he must summon the night-fighters, and an idea occurred to him. He opened a valve and gave the Skull an over-dose of oil. Dense smoke streamed from the exhaust, and he threw the fast-flying Skull into a spiral. A large letter S appeared in smoke in his trail. He whipped round in a circle, and formed an O; then spiralled again to complete another S.

The searchlight beams roved over part of the exhaust-fumes, and revealed the S O S as if draped in velvety pale-blue gauze in the night sky !

Before the escaping Jap troop-carrier could be located by the ground defences, there was a rush of Spitfires from Squadron 739. Tony waggled his wings in signal, and led them in the direction the quarry had taken. He saw the hostile plane, marked with the red sun of Japan on the wings and a black dragon on the fuselage. Then, reluctantly, he had to side-slip away to make room for the fighters.

The Spits darted in like terriers baiting a bear. Two cannon and several machine-guns blazed in defiance from the giant Jap, but lashing streams of bullets and incendiaries poured from the British fighters swooping in from all sides. Then, ripped open and blazing from end to end, the troop-carrier went rolling down to total destruction in the sea !

But Tony Starr's ingenious ruse received less notice at Ayong than it deserved. Everyone was worried about what had become of the score of Jap paratroops.

Once the exact nature of the raid was known, British and Indian troops were formed hastily into search parties. But looking for twenty Japs in the jungle at night was like seeking needles in a hayrick.

Not one of the yellow invaders had been found at sun-up, and it was not until noon that gear belonging to them was discovered. Gradually, an assortment of articles were found—gabardine overalls with zip fasteners, knee-pads of spongy rubber, boots ingeniously fitted with anti-shock springs and crash-helmets of a type that looked rather like mandarins' hats. But the Japs themselves had vanished.

Fireworks!

TONY and Badger were detailed to set forth on another night patrol, starting two hours after the firing of the sunset gun. After a high tea, they wandered into the near-by town, intending to visit the Chinese quarter.

There were nearly five thousand Chinese in Ayong, besides Indians, Malays and a few Cingalese. And this was the day of the annual Festival of the Dragon, when every Chinaman kept open house, and a wonderful dragon of gold-painted cloth paraded the streets and performed antics outside various public buildings and homes.

On the way they met Inspector Drake, of the local police force.

"Hallo, old scout !" greeted Tony cheerily. "You look as if your pet mongoose had died ! What's the latest ?"

"About those dirty Jap skulkers ?" he grunted. "We haven't a clue to where the scum have drifted. Someone's been helping those yellow monkeys, or I'm a Hindoo."

He fell in step with Tony and the sergeant.

"You heading for Chinatown?" Drake inquired. "I'm going that way myself to call on Chun Mo, the Indo-Chinese tea merchant. The fat freak imported a stack of fireworks shortly before the Japs came into the war, and I'm going to make sure he's carried out police orders by dumping 'em in the harbour."

"What's a tea merchant want fireworks for, inspector ?" asked Badger.

"He wanted 'em for this year's festival," Drake answered. "Old Chun Mo is a big noise in Ayong's Chinatown, and last year he proved it by letting off a thousand cannon-crackers and nearly set the whole place on fire. Hang it ! We can't have fireworks after dark this year—there's a war on, and the black-out to be considered."

"What's the big idea of this dragon stunt ?" Tony asked.

"Aw, a bunch of Johnny Chinamen go parading round under a gold cloth that's got a dragon's head made of painted papier mache," Drake answered. "The dragon prances up to the door of a house, and the owner of the place flourishes a stick in front of it. It's supposed to mean that all evil will then be driven away from the house for a year. Of course," he added, "the Chinee who's visited is expected to give a few rupees, and the blokes inside the dragon's skin make a pretty good profit out of the custom. Chun Mo gets a rake-off, I dare say. Anyway, the dragon always gets ready at his place and sets out from there."

He suggested that the pals should accompany him to visit the Indo-Chinese, and offered to guide them through Chinatown to see the festivities afterwards. On the way, the inspector further explained that an excited crowd always accompanied the dragon which, according to custom, could go anywhere on this night of nights.

Treachery.

THE short tropical dusk was over by the time they reached Chun Mo's house, and they passed through a compound and were shown in by a Malay servant. Chun Mo, wearing a blue robe, rose slowly from a teakwood chair and shook hands with himself in the Chinese fashion to greet the visitors.

"Welcome to my humble home, honourable fliends," he drawled. "This is a delectable pleasure."

"It's just plain business to me, Chun Mo," Inspector Drake said briskly. "Here is my warrant to search your premises, and that includes the small warehouse beyond the rear compound. My orders are to make sure you've got none of that stock of fireworks."

The pasty-looking face of the Indo-Chinese slipped into a slow smile.

"The debased fireworks were put in the so-beautiful harbour many moons ago, kind fliend," he murmured. "I am a humble but honest man with much respect for the good Blitish law."

He clapped his hands and two Malay servants appeared to act as escort. They toured the lavishly furnished house, then crossed the rear compound to the thatched warehouse, where the tea merchant kept his depleted stock.

"Open those tea chests," Drake ordered the Malays in their own tongue.

There was nothing inside them except Assam tea, and the inspector was satisfied.

Tony stooped to tie his shoe-lace as the inspector, Badger and the smiling Malays left the small "godown," or warehouse. Then suddenly, he pricked his ears. A faint knocking sounded from under the tea chests. His startled cry brought Drake and Badger hurrying back, so quickly that they failed to notice the change of expression in the Malays, who darted silently across the compound to the house.

"Someone's in this place !" Tony panted.

The three hauled the tea chests aside, and the police inspector examined the wooden floor by the torchlight. A narrow crack, free from dust, gave him a clue, and he inserted his fingers and hauled up a trapdoor.

Underneath was a cellar, and twenty Chinamen, gagged and bound, were packed into it. All were tied to wooden stakes except one, who had freed himself from one rope and had bumped against the under-side of the trapdoor with his head.

An amazing tale was unfolded by the prisoners when they were released and taken out. Drake, who had lived many years in the Far East, had a fair knowledge of Chinese and listened to them in amazement.

"These chaps," he exclaimed, turning to Tony and Badger, "were supposed to go parading in that dragon ! They were set on by some of Chun Mo's Malays and shoved out of the way. That treacherous swab of a tea merchant sheltered the Jap paratroops, and the yellow rats have gone parading through the streets under cover of the dragon's skin in the place of these fellows."

"Great snakes !" Tony ejaculated. "We've got to get after 'em !"

"And nobble Chun Mo, the slippery swab !" snapped Badger.

But the house was deserted. Chun Mo and his treacherous underlings had quietly faded away !

"These Chinamen," grunted Inspector Drake, "say that they know where they've gone, to a place beyond the town known as Koolong Clearing. It's the only place where a plane can land except at the two airfields. All the fireworks are stacked there, and the swabs are going to give the position to enemy planes to-night, when the Jap paratroops have sabotaged the hangars at the Spitfires' base. One Jap plane is to land at Koolong to take off Chun Mo and any of the saboteurs who escape."

There was no time to be lost. They tried to telephone Squadron 728 and the police headquarters, but the wires had been cut by native Fifth Columnists.

Drake hailed three rickshaws, and the trio tumbled into them and were whirled in swift procession through the darkened streets. Once they paused whilst the inspector gave instructions to a police-sergeant to collect some armed members of the Force with instructions to arrest Chun Mo and the Malays at Koolong.

By a roundabout way, Tony, Badger and the inspector raced to the side of the airfield to avoid the crowd of Chinese celebrators. The painted dragon was cavorting through the main gates, greeted by the laughter of several young airmen. None of these guessed that a score of highly trained, hand-picked Japs were concealed under the cloth of the gaudy beast !

The rickshaws halted. Tony took charge.

"Warn the airmen and get 'em armed quickly !" he exclaimed.

Only the trampling feet of the concealed Japs could be seen under the dragon's cloth, as the pantomime monster pranced over the airfield.

An idea struck Tony, alertly aware that valuable British lives would be lost by any false move before the Japs could be overcome.

The engines of one of the Spitfires on the ground was being tuned up by a couple of mechanics. Tony darted across to the plane, spoke breathlessly to the two men, who knew him, and slithered into the cockpit. He opened the throttle and taxied forward, swept into the air and spun round dizzily with one wing tip almost grazing the ground.

The airmen near the dragon were astounded. Sentries, already warned by Inspector Drake and Badger, were hurrying across the darkened field. Tony zoomed up, and swooped suddenly. The roar of the engine startled the hidden Japs; possibly they feared the unseen plane was going to crash on them.

The short dive ended superbly by Tony almost touching the dragon's back with one of the pneumatic wheels, and the fierce backlash of wind partly raised the coloured cloth. Thoroughly scared, the Japs rushed out, and the dragon's head and skin collapsed on the ground, whilst several fire-bombs rolled harmlessly from under it.

Before the disguised enemy troops could use their tommy-guns, British sentries and airmen had them covered and rounded-up. The amazing plot had fizzled out harmlessly.

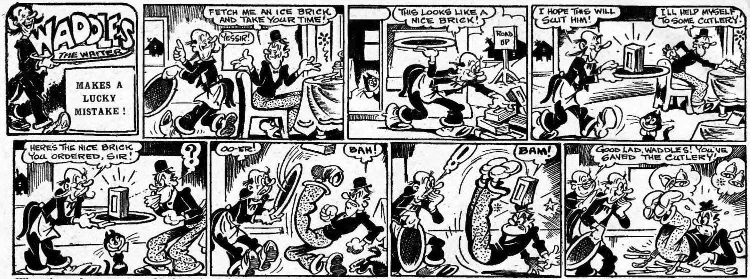
But a little later, after Tony had landed, a bonfire was started well away from the drome to deceive any Japanese air-raiders who might be on the way. This was to give the impression that the sabotage was in progress.

The sirens wailed over Ayong Island. Jap planes, timing their arrival by pre-arrangement, were on the way. Over at the Koolong Clearing, a force of troops and armed police, who had captured Chun Mo and the Malays, forced the threacherous Indo-Chinese to set off a stack of fireworks which had been hidden near by. This was the signal that brought a large Japanese troop-carrier to a slick landing, ready to take off the Fifth Columnists and the surviving paratroops.

Still another unpleasant shock was in store for the enemy. No sooner had the machine landed than the troops and police surrounded it, seizing it intact and making prisoners of the Jap crew!

"It struck me at first, my bold Badger," grinned Tony, as they sat in a double rickshaw on their way back to their squadron, "that this dragon festival was rather a daft idea. But it's not without excitement, and it proved of some useful purpose to-night !"

(Look out for "BOLD BLOCKADE!" another grand war thriller appearing in next Friday week's number.)


WADDLES THE WAITER
MAKES A LUCKY MISTAKE !
FETCH ME AN ICE BRICK AND TAKE YOUR TIME!
YESSIR!
THIS LOOKS LIKE A NICE BRICK!
ROAD UP
I HOPE THIS WILL SUIT HIM!
I'LL HELP MYSELF TO SOME CUTLERY!
HERE'S THE NICE BRICK YOU ORDERED, SIR!
?
OO-ER!
BAH!
BAM!
GOOD LAD, WADDLES! YOU'VE SAVED THE CUTLERY!

When the crafty customer ordered an ice brick, our waiter served him with a nice hard-baked one from the builder's dump. So he didn't get away with it.

PLUM AND DUFF, THE BOYS OF THE BOLD BRIGADE!

AS IT'S OLD BOGEY'S BIRTHDAY WE'LL HANG OUT THE REGIMENTAL COLOURS!
NAILS

1. As it was Bogey's birthday, our bold boys decided to hang out the regimental colours on the end of a broom. Then Sergy boodled along.

2. " What are those two young rips up to ? " he yapped, poking his nose in as usual. But at that moment the broom flopped down on his nut.

TCHA! INSULTING THE REGIMENT'S COLOURS! PUT THOSE KIDS ON FATIGUE!

3. 'Cos it wasn't properly fixed, d'ye see ? It gave Suet a hearty whang and the colours dropped down. Bogey saw that and was properly peeved.

ONE PICKUP ALL THE LITTER AND THE OTHER HOSE DOWN THE PARADE GROUND, SEE!

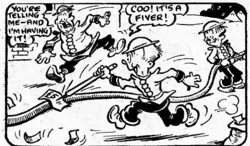
4. " Put those two rascals on fatigue, Suet ! " he ordered. Sergy promptly gave them the job to hose the parade ground and pick up the litter.

JUST LIKE SUET TO PICK A WINDY DAY FOR THIS JOB!

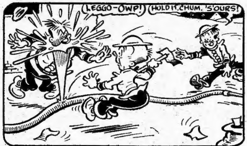
5. Plum got busy with the hose, whilst Duff did his best chasing the stray bits of paper. Some job it was, too, considering the weather was so windy.

WELL, GET IT BACK AGAIN!
THERE'S THAT PIECE BLOWN OFF NOW!

6. One bit of paper no sooner got jabbed upon the spike than it fluttered off again. " Bust it ! " snapped Duff. " Get it back again ! " cried Suet.


YOU'RE TELLING ME—AND I'M HAVING IT!
COO! IT'S A FIVER!

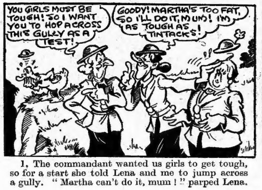
7. So Duff made a dive after it and managed to run it to earth as it reposed across the hose. " Whoopee ! " he gurgled. " It's a fiver ! "


LEGGO-OWP!
HOLD IT, CHUM. 'S OURS!

8. Yes, that's what it was, and Suet lost no time in going after it. But the spike had made a hole in the hose, and when Duff drew it out—

NOW FOR FIVE QUIDS WORTH OF GOOD TIME!
£5

9. He'd got the fiver all right, whilst all Suet got was a hearty gush of tapjuice right in the chivvy. So the boys had the last laugh after all.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1. The commandant wanted us girls to get tough, so for a start she told Lena and me to jump across a gully. " Martha can't do it, mum ! " parped Lena.

THIS INNER TUBE WILL HELP ME TO PUT IT OVER!
MARTHA! CLEAR THESE GNATS AWAY, THEY'LL WORRY LENA!

2. With that, she smacked me out of it and said she'd jump across herself. But while I was told to shoo some gnats away, Lena hit on an artful wheeze-

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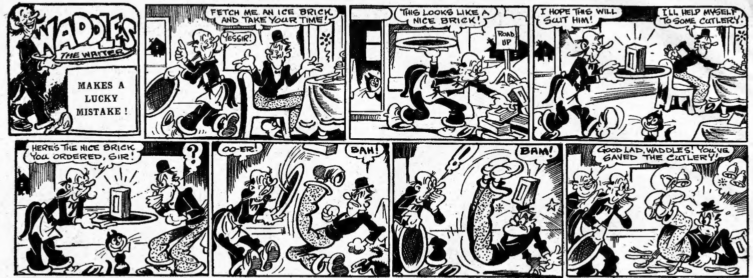
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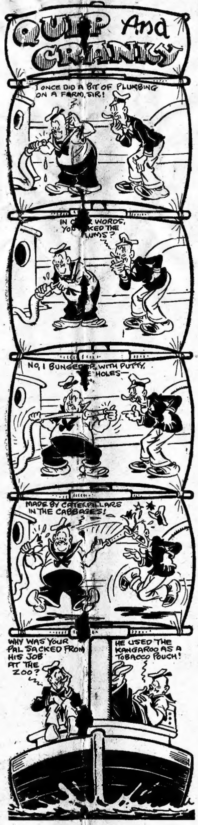
COMIC CUTS—
KING OF COMICS.


QUIP And CRANKY
I ONCE DID A BIT OF PLUMBING ON A FARM, SIR!
IN OTHER WORDS, YOU PICKED THE PLUMS?
NO, I BUNGED UP, WITH PUTTY, THE HOLES—
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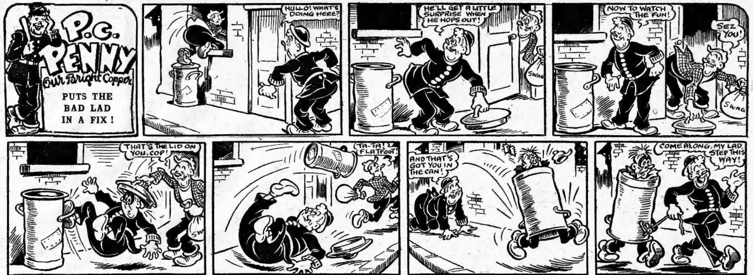
HE USED THE KANGAROO AS A TOBACCO POUCH!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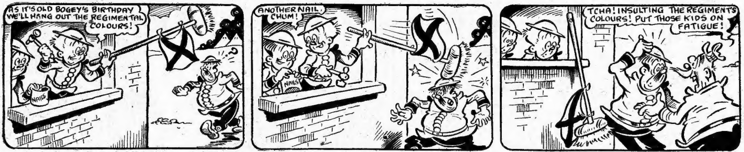
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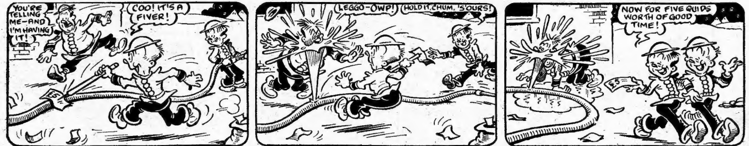
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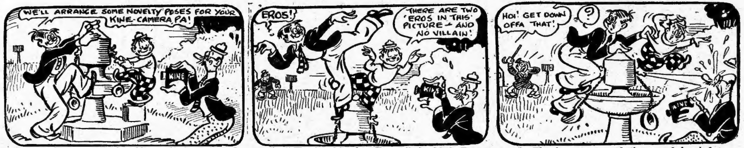
BIG BEN AND LITTLE LEN, THE LARKY LADS!


WE'LL ARRANGE SOME NOVELTY POSES FOR YOUR KINE-CAMERA, PA!
KINE
EROS!
THERE ARE TWO 'EROS IN THIS PICTURE—AND NO VILLAIN!
HOI! GET DOWN OFFA THAT!
?

1. Pa had treated himself to a cine-camera and was anxious to use it. So he took the two lads along and got them to pose on the park fountain.

2. "How's this for Eros ?" burbled Ben. "Hold it !" tootled Pa delightedly. "That'll make a lovely picture !" But, just then—

3. The keeper spotted them and bawled to the lads to get down, which they did. And as Ben biffed the tap with his knee, Pa got splashed.

YOU TAKE ME AS THE VOLGA BOATMAN!
A BIT FARTHER OUT TO GET INTO FOCUS, PA!
PROD!
OH! THE BOATHOOK HAS STUCK IN!
YO-HO-YEAVE HO

4. Still, that didn't damp his enthusiasm a bit, and they made for the river, where Pa got into a boat and handed his priceless camera over to Ben.

5. "Take me as the Volga boatman !" he chirped. "Better get a bit farther out, Pa !" said Ben. So little Len gave the boat a shove.

6. He used a boathook, which was a pity. For it got firmly caught in the stern, and as Pa rowed away, Len was wafted right off the jetty.

HEY! COME BACK, CHUMP—YOU'LL SPOIL THE PICTURE!
HOLD IT, PA—THAT'S PERFECT!
BEWARE OF THE WEIR
THIS'LL MAKE A GOOD ONE—PA SHOOTING THE RAPIDS!

7. "Hoi ! You're not in this picture !" bawled Ben. "You'll spoil it !" So he grabbed Len with the idea of jerking him back. But—

8. The strain was too much for the stern of the boat, which came clean away. Len sat down with a bump, while the boat's bows went up in the air.

9. So did Pa, well and truly. And to crown all his troubles, he was whisked away to the weir. Ben took a lovely picture as Pa went right over !

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I'VE JUST GOT TO KEEP ON PUFFING AND IT'S EASY!
GET AWAY, YOU GNATS! TRY A FACEFUL OF THIS!
S-S-S-S
A-A-AH!
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4. Not a bad notion, was it ? And she might have got away with it, too, if I hadn't spurted out a load of fine spray at the gnats. For Lena got most of it !

5. The result was that she had to stop puffing up the hidden tube to let loose a hearty sneeze. That caused it properly, and she got let down with a run.

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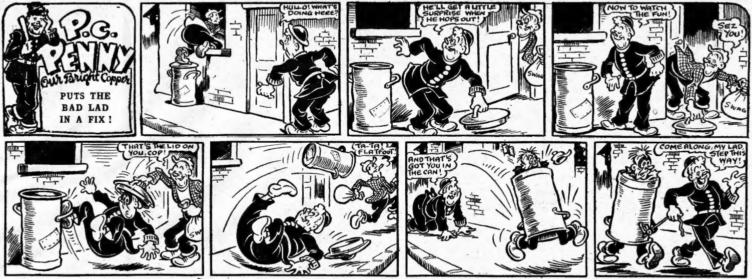
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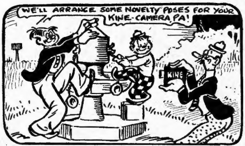
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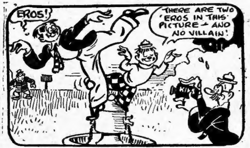
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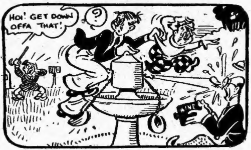
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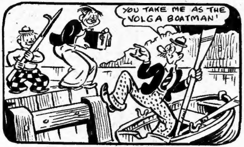
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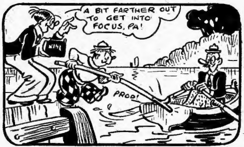
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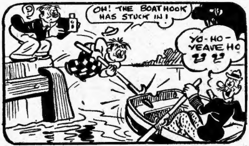
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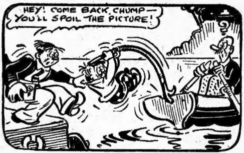
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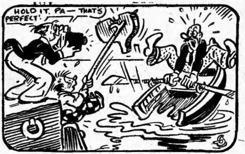
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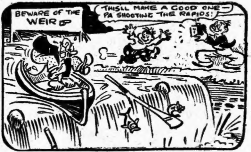
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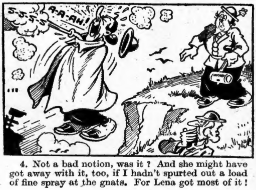

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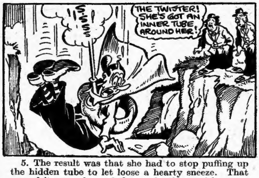
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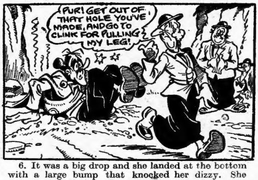
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ROVER JOE

Enemies in Wait!

FAST and furious, a man galloped into Black Dog, Nevada, a lone hamlet reddened by the sunset. His spurred horse slid to a halt and the rider, leaping from the saddle, burst through the door of a dingy saloon.

"Rover Joe's comin' down th' trail!" he blurted, with an oath.

Snarls of surprise and dismay rasped from the dozen tough-looking men who lounged in the saloon, drinking or playing cards. Instinctively, most of them clapped hand to gun at the mere mention of a hated name.

"Rover Joe! That doggone pest!" blazed a burly, bearded fellow. "Cuss him, he's always bobbin' up just where he ain't wanted! That little guy don't seem human sometimes! Be you sure it was him, Jake?"

"Yeah, boss. I was comin' down the mountain trail when I spotted him. It's Rover Joe sure enough. He's ridin' that ornery ole grey hoss as usual, and there's a coupla kids—young range hoboes, I reckon—with him!"

Silence fell, ugly and dangerous. It was broken by another curse from the bearded man, who jumped up, viciously alert. There was no sheriff or marshall in Black Dog, and men carried their own law in their holsters. Not for nothing was "Spadebeard" Hagan known as the leader of the worst gang of gunmen in all that wild region.

"Rover Joe, huh?" rumbled Hagan. "O.K. Now, listen, and don't start gettin' scared! I reckon Rover Joe's comin' here to visit ole Tex Barley—I know they're old pards—and this evening, boys, we're gonna put a stop to Tex Barley's interference, too! So, if Rover Joe meets Barley here in town—and that's a cert, I guess—we'll kill both birds at one smack! I gotta long account to settle with Rover Joe, anyway!"

"Fine, boss!" gloated another ruffian. "But how about these two kids who are ridin' with Rover Joe? What are they like, Jake?"

"Aw, just kids, like I said," shrugged Jake, the rider. "They looked like a coupla young drifters Rover Joe's picked up on th' trail for company. Even if they come this far, it's likely they'll scram at th' first shot, and if they don't, we'll fix them, too! They sure didn't look anything to worry about!"

"Right!" growled Spadebeard Hagan, pouring himself a drink. "Then listen t' yore orders, you guys, 'cos to-night we're gonna bump off the two most interferin' old cusses in th' West!"

Thus, in cold blood, a double ambush was laid in Black Dog.

And at that moment, a mile away, Rover Joe drew rein on the last low ridge outside the town.

With the little adventurer rode the two "young drifters," Bob Taylor and Spike Muldoon, the ex-reformatory boys whom Joe had taken under his wing. He grinned at them cheerily. But his expression grew more serious as he pointed ahead.

"There it is, boys—Black Dog," Joe announced quietly. "And Black Dog, lemme tell you, is the toughest camp you lads have met up with so far. There ain't no sheriff, and most of th' citizens are either law-dodgers or loafers, always ready to fight or run. Also, it's th' hang-out of Spadebeard Hagan's gang, and they're th' worst of th' lot!"

"Sounds nice, Joe," grinned Bob, the burly English lad. "If this health resort is so bad, why have you brought us here?"

"Because there's one decent man who lives around Black Dog, and he can do with some pards," Joe replied steadily. "I want you to meet my old friend, Tex Barley, one of th' finest gents in th' West! Tex will have work for you boys, and you'll take it! You may have to fight for it first, but—you'll take it!"

Bob and Spike grinned again at the calm command.

Once on a time—and not long ago, either—the two tough lads would have flatly refused to obey any order from Rover Joe whatever.

But those days were over now for good. Bob and Spike, the "wildcats" from Jorgen Reformatory, were no longer out to defy Joe at all costs, even if it meant cutting off their noses to spite their faces.

Cheery Joe had tamed them first, then taught them discipline, decency, and devotion. He had won their dour respect, and loyally now they gave of their best.

"O.K., Uncle Joe. What you say goes!" drawled Spike, with his New York twang. "You're de boss, so give us de woiks!"

"Come on then!" grinned Joe. "And not so much of the 'uncle,' you saucy young jay!"

They entered Black Dog in the last rays of the sunset; and as they came single file into the "street," a man strolled out of a tumbledown shack to meet Joe.

He was tall and lank, with grizzled hair and wise, humorous eyes. Briefly he saluted Joe with a flip of his hand.

"Hi 'ya y' old hoss-thief!" drawled Tex Barley. "Long time no see!"

"Hi, Tex!" beamed Joe. "Yeah, it's quite a while since I last saw that ugly mug o' yours, but I got yore letter in Flagstaff. These lads are the buckos I wrote ye about, and they're good lads—now! Boys, meet Mr. Barley, of the Lone Star ranch."

Joe turned to the "wildcats." And by that movement alone, Rover Joe escaped death!

Two shots cracked like whips through the stillness.

Both ripped from the dingy saloon opposite Tex Barley's shack, and one tore the brim of Joe's sombrero. As his hat jerked into the air, so the little adventurer whipped out his guns by instinct, crouching low. His eyes darted like knives. Then a low fierce hiss escaped his lips.

For the second treacherous shot had found its target. Crumpled on the ground lay Tex Barley, with a red stream pouring from his shoulder.

And the speed at which Rover Joe flamed into action then was an eye-opener to Bob and Spike, who thought they knew him by now.

"Drag Tex into the shack, you boys!" he roared. "We'll fight these dogs from there!"

Craa-ack! Fire and lead spurted from Joe's guns, even as the "wildcats" flew to Tex Barley's aid and more shots spat from the saloon. It was a terrific volley from the fastest, deadliest little gun-fanner in the West. Saloon windows smashed asunder, two of the Hagan gang crashed to the floor, and Spadebeard himself was gashed by flying glass. So fierce was Joe's bombardment that, for a moment, it silenced the fire of the outlaws.

Then, reloading with magic fingers, the little fighter backed to the shack, covering his own and the boys' retreat with a thunderous barrage.

Craa-ack! More bullets flew his way and a burning weal scorched his cheek. But, with smoking guns aflame, Joe gained the shack at last. He leaped backwards through the door, slamming it with a single kick. Then, having dropped the bar, he spun round to look at Tex and the boys.

"Thunderin' cats! Where have those lads gone?" Joe gasped blankly next moment.

For Tex Barley, clutching his wounded shoulder, sprawled on the floor all alone. Of the "wildcats" there was no sign at all.

And a slow, wry grin creased Tex's leathery countenance as he propped himself painfully against a table-leg.

"I guess them boys o' yourn ain't so good an' brave as you thought, Joe," muttered the wounded veteran. "Leastways, the big English lad said they wasn't goin' to stop in here and get shot up like rats in a trap. So they—they dumped me down here. Then they scrambled outa th' back window and ran like—scalded cats!"

"Well, smack me down!" gasped Joe, his expression almost tragic in its grief and disappointment.

The Battle of Black Dog!

OUTLAW bullets were cracking against the shack now, and as more shots whanged against the back wall, Joe guessed that Hagan's gang had screwed up pluck enough to surround him. But he was not worrying about treacherous outlaws just then. There would be time enough to think about them in a moment.

It was the utterly unexpected, the amazing desertion of Bob and Spike that cut Rover Joe to the heart.

Headstrong and unruly they might be, but Joe could have staked his life that the boys he had befriended so well were not cowards. Yet, when the real pinch had come, they had turned "yellow" and fled like a pair of half-breeds, leaving him to defend a wounded man against savage besiegers.

"Joe, don't take it so hard, old lad, they're only kids, after all," muttered Tex, touched by his friend's stricken look. "Come on, we'll fight this war together. This old shack ain't very strong. I only use it when I come to Black Dawg—but it'll last us a while. I—I've been fighting Hagan's gang all by myself now for a consid'able time, so, with you here, I reckon we can beat 'em yet!"

"We'll have a thunderin' good try!" snapped Joe, suddenly cold as ice.

Yet even his great heart felt mighty hopeless as he edged to the front window and let drive some rapid shots. Most of the gang were in the saloon opposite, he judged, attacking by direct fire, while perhaps two or three had sneaked round to cut off any retreat from behind.

"Thunderin' cats!" Joe gasped. "Where have those lads gone?"

Nor was there any chance of aid from the rest of the "citizens." Men fought their own battles in Black Dog!

Crack! Cra-ash! Bullets came tearing through the old shack walls at last, forcing Joe to crouch lower. Crockery smashed on a shelf above him, a cooking-pot boomed loudly, and a jar of molasses flew apart, smearing the floor with sticky syrup.

Twice Joe glimpsed shadowy heads moving inside the saloon. To the roar of his guns, two more of Hagan's gang met their reward.

"Hold that, you snakes!" gritted Joe, only to stagger as a glancing bullet numbed his left arm.

Behind him, half under the table, Tex Barley was grimly stanching his own wound. The door shuddered under a blast of lead. Joe, with only one gun working, returned the volley as fast as he could.

And from the outlaw's "fortress" the firing grew brisker.

There were six men of the original twelve still left in the saloon and, with savage vigour, five kept up the siege. Spadebeard Hagan had been gashed too badly to use a gun. But even while he nursed his face and cursed, the raging outlaw noticed that Joe's fire was slackening.

"He's weakening, boys! We'll get Rover Joe now!" snarled Hagan at last. "Jake, stand by th' front door and fling it open when I yell! You others, get ready to rush Barley's shack, firing as you go. Ready now! One—two——"

Crash!

It was not the front door, but the rear entrance to the saloon that burst open then, unguarded all this time, since there seemed no need. The glow of a lamp shone in the twilight.

And into the saloon, right into the enemy's midst, stormed Bob and Spike, the missing "wildcats."

"Take this, you scum!" roared Bob.

With all his strength he flung down the burden he carried. It was a lighted oil-lamp, filched from a cabin lower down, after the owner had been knocked silly by Bob's big fist.

Smash! it went on the floor at Spadebeard Hagan's feet, exploding like a bomb. Two seconds later the saloon itself seemed to explode as well.

For there was fiery liquor from bullet-smashed bottles splashed about on the floor, and as the flying, burning oil found this fresh fuel, the whole place roared up in sheets of flame.

Dumbstruck and terrified, the gangsters suddenly found themselves trapped in a glaring furnace. Before they could even yell with terror, Bob and Spike had darted out again, dragging Spadebeard Hagan by the neck.

"Gosh! We're sunk!" screeched Jake, and flung the front door wide open. Scorched and dazzled, the others stampeded madly after him—to their doom.

For the spreading flames in the saloon turned every one of those outlaws into a well-lighted target for Rover Joe, and Joe was too bitterly furious just then to waste a single shot.

Amid the final volley from his gun, Spadebeard Hagan's gang ceased to exist, while the three snipers attacking the shack from behind promptly lost all heart and ran for dear life.

There came the crashing of sun-dried timbers, a column of sparks, then a fierce volcano of flames as the saloon began to cave in. And Joe, with Tex Barley, was still peering out at the furnace with bewildered eyes when the "wildcats" tumbled into the shack.

"Hallo, Uncle Joe! You all right?" asked Bob, cool and quiet as ever. "We've sloshed Spadebeard Hagan senseless, and if there's a reward out for that brute, we can claim it.

"By the way, I hope you didn't think we funked the fight, but, you see, I reckoned it best to bust out of that back window before the shack was properly surrounded, so there wasn't time to explain.

"Quite a lively fight while it lasted, wasn't it? But I don't think that gang will worry us any more, old sure-shot—— Ouch!"

Rover Joe, without a word, had flung himself on both boys and was beating them with lusty blows of joy.

"There! And you thought my boys had funked it, Tex Barley!" he roared. "Shucks! Did I say all along they were good boys, just the kind you needed? They sneak out and beat Hagan's gang all by themselves, then stroll back and say it was 'quite lively.' Doggone you, Tex Barley, what d'you think of my 'wildcats' now?"

Tex forced another painful grin.

"Boys, I'm offerin' you a job," he said. "It's to help me run my ranch, the Lone Star. It ain't much of a ranch or much of a job. But——"

"But you'll take it, lads!" broke in Rover Joe. "It'll be hard work, tough work, but if you aim to be ranchers yourselves one day, Tex can teach you more than any man I know. He's old and ornery now, but you're young and fresh! Together you'll make a swell team!"

"And you, Joe?" asked Bob huskily, after a long pause.

"Never you mind about me!" commanded Joe. "You lads need a job and a place to call home. I'll miss you, but—I'm on my way!"

And at daybreak next morning Rover Joe departed from Black Dog, leaving it a much cleaner place. He also left Tex Barley in charge of Bob and Spike—having promised to ride back in six months to see how his "boys" were getting on.

"I'm sorry to leave the lads, Sleepy, but our life was no life for them, eh?" Joe murmured, as he jogged up the trail. "We've made two loyal men out of two wildcats, old hoss. So now, foot-loose and free again—that's us!"

(Follow the adventure trail with Rover Joe again next Friday week.)

A Champion Chuckle-raiser!

NOSEY PETER!

On the Prowl!

PETER PEEPER was well known in the town of Tidville where he lived and for one thing especially—he liked nothing better than to poke his inquisitive nose into other people's business.

It had often got him into trouble, needless to say. But he seemed absolutely incurable. It was as natural for Peter to be nosey as for a tadpole to twiddle its tail.

One fine afternoon Peter was doing an aimless roam round when he met a man named Jimmy Howard, who lived in the same street. Whereas Peter was a thin, gloomy-looking individual, Jimmy had a cheery, round face and a waistcoat to match.

"Hallo! Where are you off to?" inquired Peter, inquisitive as usual.

"Oh, I'm just going along to the shops to get a few things for the missus," replied Jimmy. "She's too busy to come out, so I offered to do a drop of shopping for her. Grub mostly, if I can get it. So I'd better pop along. Toodle-pip!"

With that Jimmy toddled off, leaving Peter staring after him.

"Going to get a bit of grub, eh?" snorted Peter, with a sniff. "By the look of him, he doesn't go short of much. He wouldn't look so plump and cheery as he does if he had to put up with short rations, like I and everybody else has to. I shouldn't be at all surprised if he manages to get extra stuff on the quiet."

And with that uncharitable thought Peter continued on his way. But some time later he bumped into Jimmy Howard again.

This time Jimmy did not see Peter, for he was standing at the door of a grocer's shop, kept by a Mr. Bailey. The latter, a bald-headed man wearing a white apron, was engaged in conversation with Jimmy.

"Ah! I wonder what they're talking about?" muttered Peter suspiciously. "They're not talking very loudly, I notice. Something they don't want overheard evidently. I'll try to get an earful."

Thus resolved. Peter sidled up as close as he could to the two men, who did not even notice him. Pretending to be staring at the display of tins and packets in the shop-window, Peter's alert and well-practised ears overheard what they were saying.

"You come along after I've shut," said Bailey. "That'll be six o'clock. Then I'll have the stuff ready for you."

"I'd sooner you made it a bit later," replied Jimmy. "I'd prefer to wait till it's dark, then nobody would see me."

"All right, that suits me," said Bailey. "Come along as soon as it's dark, then, and come round to the back door."

"Okey-doke!" tootled Jimmy. "See you later."

With that he went off, and, to Peter's relief, Jimmy did not notice him standing there. Bailey went inside his shop, and Peter stood there with bulging, sparkling eyes.

"Oho! I've overheard a basinful this time, and no mistake!" he muttered excitedly. "My suspicions were well founded, after all. Mr. Howard does get more than his rations obviously. He's got some wangle on with Bailey, the grocer, and he's coming back this evening to fetch some stuff. Doesn't want to be seen, so he won't come till it's dark. That clinches the matter. I'm going to follow this up, and I rather think that Mr. Artful Howard will get a very nasty jolt by the time I've finished with him. The unpatriotic, greedy food-hog!"

Peter was convinced that he had tumbled on to something after his own heart—spying on somebody else and trying to get that person into trouble.

From the time he reached home again he remained behind the curtains of the front sitting-room, keeping a watchful eye on the house of Jimmy Howard farther down the road.

The wrathful grocer caught Peter a hearty thump on the nose!

Daylight waned and dusk fell. Soon Jimmy would be coming forth, thought Peter. And he was not disappointed.

He saw Jimmy emerge from his front gate and go hurrying off. Peter darted outside and followed in his wake, thrilled with the excitement of the chase.

After a while Jimmy reached Bailey's shop and went round to the back. Peter took up his stand on the opposite pavement to wait till Jimmy emerged again.

"And when he does appear, loaded up, no doubt, with tins and packets of grub," he muttered, "I will pounce on him and denounce him! I'll show him up!"

Time passed, and then Peter had a surprise; for he saw Jimmy returning—not loaded with parcels, however, but hauling a two-wheeled handcart.

And that handcart was well packed with an assortment of tins and packages. Judging by the way Jimmy strained, the load was a heavy one to pull.

"Phew!" gasped the watching Peter. "This is even worse than I thought. He's got enough tins and packets of grub of all kinds there to last him for months. He ought to be locked up, and Bailey, too, for supplying him. I suppose Howard has paid well over the controlled prices, so that Bailey gets a good rake-off."

Peter waited till Jimmy had got some distance ahead, then he stealthily followed him in the gloom. As he expected, Jimmy made for his house and disappeared with the barrow into the garage at the side.

"So that's where he's going to store the stuff!" muttered Peter. "What's the best thing for me to do? Denounce him now, or inform the police? That would be a good idea, to get a constable to come along and catch him red-handed."

After a few minutes the garage door opened again and Jimmy came forth, dragging the empty barrow. He went back the way he had come; and Peter, as he followed once more, guessed that Jimmy was returning the barrow to Bailey now that he had finished with it.

"I know what I'll do!" muttered Peter, when the shop was reached and Jimmy had dragged the barrow round to the back. "I'll pop along to the police station and inform them what's going on."

Away he skipped to the police station, which was not far off, and there he excitedly told his story to the officer in charge, who promptly detailed a policeman to accompany Peter to Bailey's shop.

But as they reached the shop out came Jimmy again, dragging the barrow. And it was loaded just as it had been before.

"Coo! Look at that!" gasped Peter, pulling the bobby back into the shadows. "Don't let him see us! Don't pounce on him yet. This is worse than ever. He's got a second lot. Let's follow him."

This they did; and again Jimmy went to his house, where he unloaded the barrow inside the garage. Then he trundled it back to Bailey's shop again, faithfully followed by Peter and the policeman.

"Will you catch them now?" asked Peter. "Or shall we wait to see if he brings any more stuff out?"

The policeman decided on the latter, and before long Jimmy appeared again, dragging a freshly loaded barrow. The performance was repeated—first the trip to Jimmy's house to unload the stuff in the garage, then back again with the empty barrow.

And Peter, all afire with suppressed excitement, followed, with the policeman, every step of the way.

"Let's come round the back, too," suggested the officer when Jimmy had taken the barrow that way. "Perhaps we might hear something."

Cautiously the pair crept round to the yard at the back of the shop.

"Well, that's the lot!" they heard Bailey exclaim. "I must say it didn't take so very long, and I'm much obliged to you, Jimmy."

"Not at all," replied Jimmy. "The pleasure's mine."

"So I should think!" snorted Peter. "Getting all that hoard of foodstuff! And Bailey ought to be grateful to you, too, as you've no doubt paid him a good price for the stuff."

He turned to the policeman at his side.

"What about it?" he hissed. "They've finished now. Don't you think that now is the time to pounce on them and confront them?"

"Yes, perhaps you're right," said the bobby.

With that he stepped boldly forth, with Peter at his heels. In a few strides they reached Jimmy and Bailey.

"Now then, you two," said the copper in stern accents, "I've been following this man and the barrow of stuff he's been taking away to his house, as the result of information received. I should like to know what it all means. And let me warn you that anything you say may be taken down, twisted round, and used in evidence against you."

Gasps broke from Bailey and Jimmy Howard—gasps which to Peter proved that they were utterly staggered to have been caught thus. Bailey was the first to find his voice.

"What do you mean, officer?" he cried. "I don't know what you're talking about. My friend Mr. Howard has very kindly done me a service this evening."

"Done you a service?" almost screeched Peter, pushing forward. "Oh, yes, and himself as well! It's no use denying it; we know everything, for we've been following you and watching you. You've been supplying Howard with three barrowloads of tinned and other stuff after hours, and doubtless at a price which leaves a nice fat profit for yourself. He's parked the stuff in his garage—several hundredweight of it."

There was a blank pause, then both Bailey and Jimmy burst into loud laughter.

"You interfering, nosey old nitwit!" cried Jimmy. "So that's what you think, is it? Well, perhaps you'll listen while Mr. Bailey tells you the truth."

"I certainly will," said Bailey. "The fact is, officer, my store shed is badly needing repair. So Mr. Howard very kindly offered to take charge of the stock in it and keep it in his garage till the shed had been patched up and put right. That'll take a couple of days or so, after which the stuff will all come back again."

The constable gave a grunt, whilst Peter felt everything swim round him. He realised that he had put his foot in it badly.

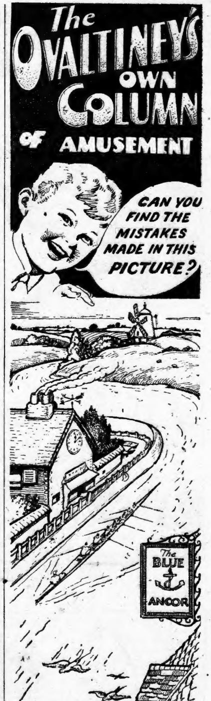
"And you say you've come here as the result of information received," went on Bailey. "Of course, no need to ask who gave you the information. It was this long-nosed old depth charge here; he's always poking his inquisitive sniffer into what doesn't concern him. Perhaps that'll put it out of action for a bit. Hold that!"

The wrathful grocer landed out and caught Peter a hearty thump on the nose that made him howl. Then, with tears welling to his eyes and feeling that his long, tingling nose had suddenly become a home for hundreds of ants, he took to his heels and fled.

And from that day he has never taken the slightest interest in any of Jimmy Howard's movements!

(Another merry yarn in our next number, on sale Friday week.)

20-6-42


The Ovaltiney's Own Column of Amusement
CAN YOU FIND THE MISTAKES MADE IN THIS PICTURE?
The BLUE ANCOR

To Find the Answers
Face this paper towards a mirror

1. Windmill has too many sails.
2. Smoke blowing in wrong direction.
3. Minute hand of clock should be pointing to half-hour.
4. Coxswain should be at other end of boat, facing oarsmen.
5. Incorrect spelling of word "Anchor."
6. Bird's wings in reverse position.

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Drink delicious
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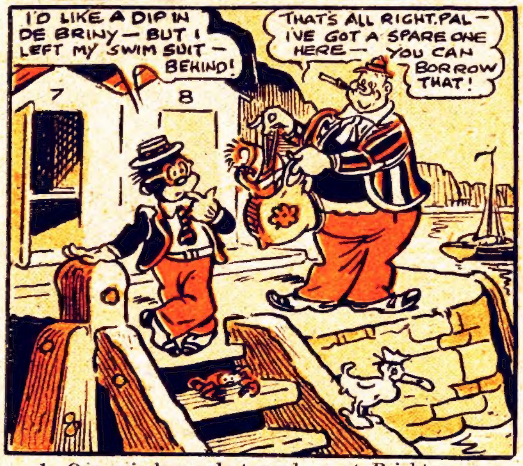
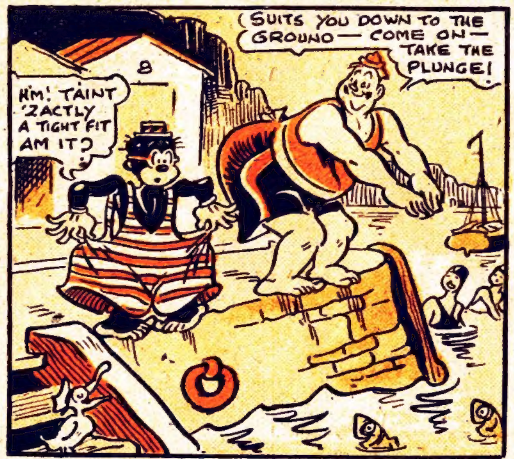
PINHEAD and PETE

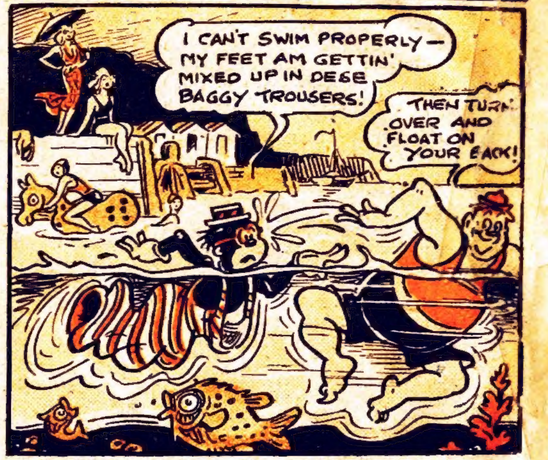
THEY MANAGE TO GET ALONG SWIMMINGLY!


I'D LIKE A DIP IN DE BRINY — BUT I LEFT MY SWIM SUIT — BEHIND!
THAT'S ALL RIGHT, PAL — I'VE GOT A SPARE ONE HERE — YOU CAN BORROW THAT!
7
8

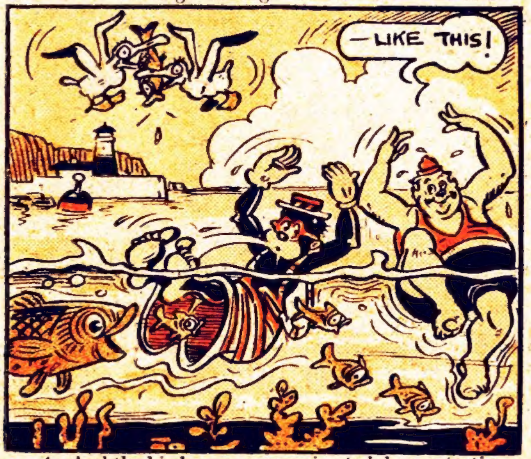
1. Our priceless pals turned up at Brightsea, one fine early-closing day last week, and after a good look at the briny, Pete came all over dippy. "I'se no swim suit and I wanna go bathing in de sea—see?" he said.


SUITS YOU DOWN TO THE GROUND — COME ON — TAKE THE PLUNGE!
H'M! TAINT 'ZACTLY A TIGHT FIT AM IT?
8

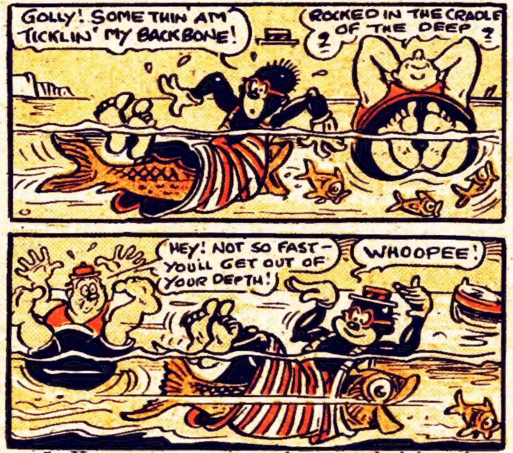
2. "Well, there's no need to go off the deep end about it!" parped big-hearted Pinhead. "You can borrow this spare one of mine!" So the coon jumped at the chance and jumped into the swim suit.


I CAN'T SWIM PROPERLY — MY FEET AM GETTIN' MIXED UP IN DESE BAGGY TROUSERS!
THEN TURN OVER AND FLOAT ON YOUR BACK!

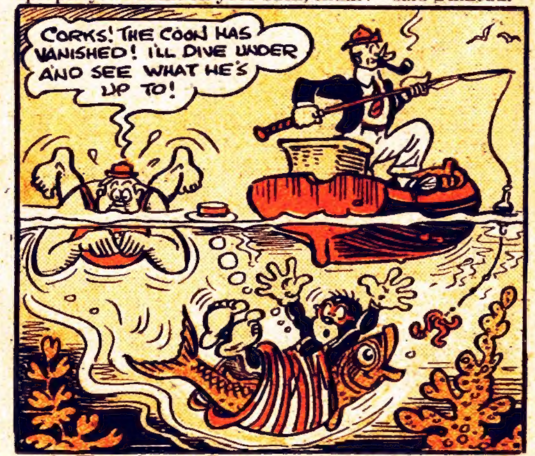
3. Of course, that outsize in bathing costumes was not exactly a tight fit, as Pete remarked, and after taking the plunge he found he was unable to swim properly. "Float on your back, chum!" said Pinhead.



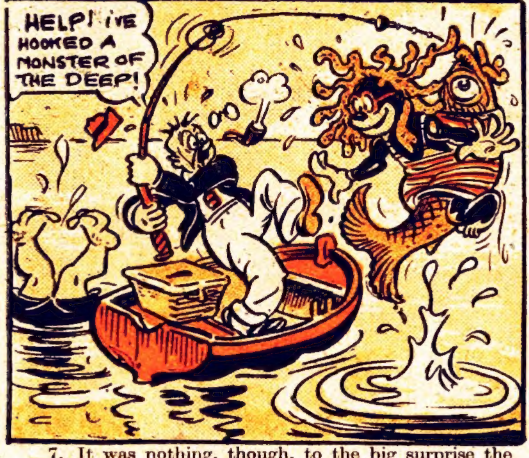
4. And the big boy gave an animated demonstration which should have proved a star turn. But when the coon tried it, he felt more like a porpoise trying to do the victory roll. "Dat's better!" he gurgled at last.


GOLLY! SOMETHIN' AM TICKLIN' MY BACKBONE!
ROCKED IN THE CRADLE OF THE DEEP
HEY! NOT SO FAST — YOU'LL GET OUT OF YOUR DEPTH!
WHOOPEE!

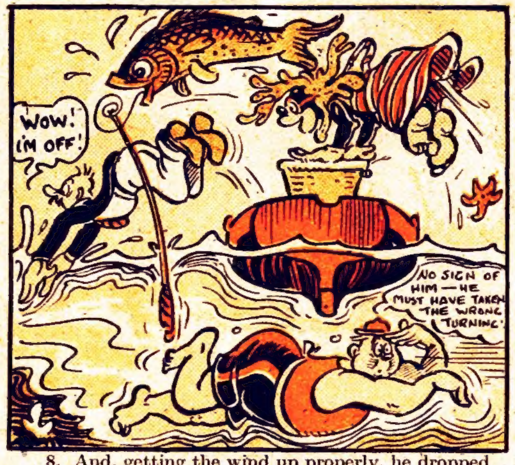
5. However, as soon as he started doing the back-stroke, an overgrown sardine got entangled in Pete's baggy trousers, and after that he got along much better. In fact, Pinhead was left behind.


CORKS! THE COON HAS VANISHED! I'LL DIVE UNDER AND SEE WHAT HE'S UP TO!

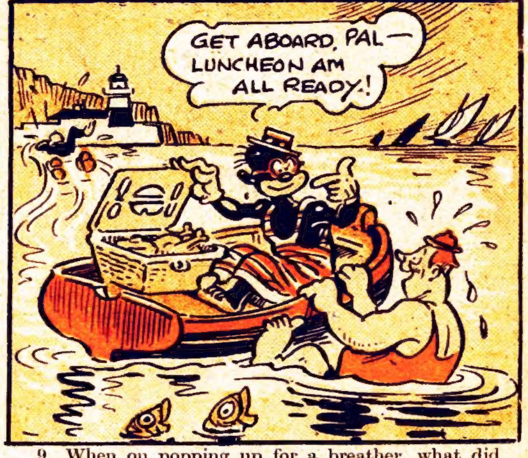
6. Then, just as Pete was enjoying the experience of speeding along on the water without any effort, the finniosity dived to snaffle a tempting worm and Pete had to go under with him, much to Pinhead's surprise.


HELP! I'VE HOOKED A MONSTER OF THE DEEP!

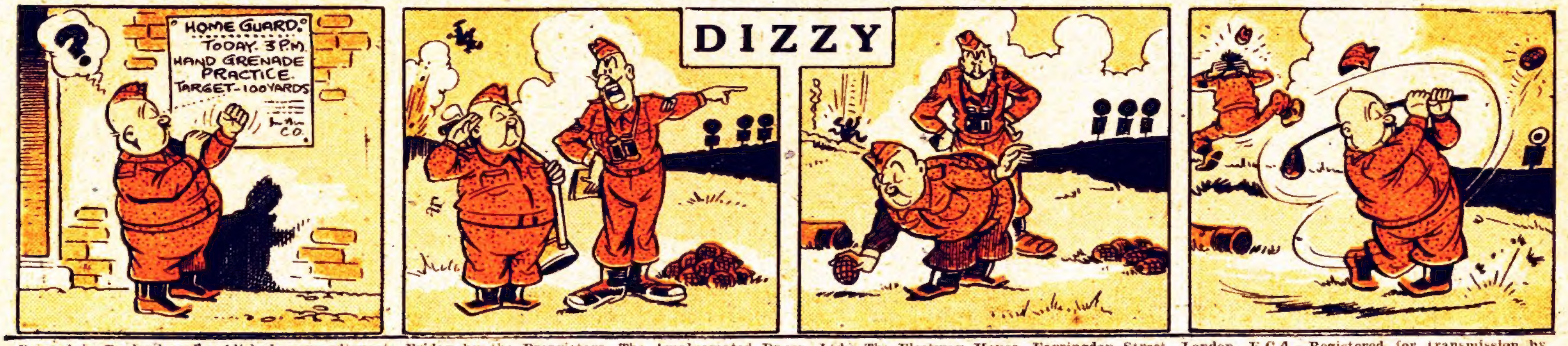
7. It was nothing, though, to the big surprise the peaceful old angler received when he yanked up his fishing-line and twigged his amazing catch. "Great sticklebats!" he gasped. "What a two-faced monster."


WOW! I'M OFF!
NO SIGN OF HIM — HE MUST HAVE TAKEN THE WRONG TURNING.

8. And, getting the wind up properly, he dropped his rod and dived overboard into the vasty deep with all speed, thereby letting Pete down well and truly. Pinhead began to think he had lost his pal—


GET ABOARD, PAL — LUNCHEON AM ALL READY!

9. When on popping up for a breather, what did he see but the cheery coon calmly making himself at home in the old angler's boat. "Look what de old boy hab left us!" he grinned. "We am just in time!"



DIZZY

?
HOME GUARD. TODAY. 3 P.M. HAND GRENADE PRACTICE. TARGET - 100 YARDS
CO.

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